

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 2 and 29 are currently being cancelled.

Claims 1, 3, 28 and 30 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added.

This amendment and reply amends and cancels claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending and canceling the claims as set forth above, claims 1, 3-8, 11, 12, 15-28 and 30-54 are now pending in this application.

Indication of Allowable Subject Matter:

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter made in the Office Action with respect to claims 4-8, 11, 12, 15-27, 31-57 (allowed) and claims 2-3 and 29-30 (objected to). By way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 1 has been amended to include the features of "objected to" (and now canceled) claim 2, whereby claims 1 and 3 (which depends from claim 1) are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action. Also, by way of this amendment and reply, presently pending independent claim 28 has been amended to include the features of "objected to" (and now canceled) claim 29, whereby claims 28 and 30 (which depends from claim 28) are now in allowable form based on the indications made in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,424,608 to Takeuchi. Due to the amendments made to claims 1 and 28 so that they now include the features of "objected to" (and now canceled) claims 2 and 29, respectively, this rejection is now moot.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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